

August 11, 1956

Dr. Curt Stern
Dept. Zoology
University of California
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Dear Curt:

Like most other geneticists, I have had in the back of my mind for a long time the problem of genetic selection, on an experimental basis. But it seemed to me that the lack of real progress in this field reflected a deficiency in the experimental material. How could one expect to make significant tests on mice or rabbits, with all the difficulties of proving a significant effect on a limited sample of progeny. My thoughts were then turning (purely hypothetically) to the a priori desiderata, and in fact to fish, or perhaps some aquatic invertebrates, as appropriate material.

So I was interested and surprised to hear recently from Gunther Stent that one of your students has accomplished this tour de force with rabbits. He reported that very substantial separations of X- from Y- spermatozoa were possible by cataphoresis, and were amply confirmed by changes in the sex ratio of the offspring. I am writing to ask you to confirm this report and whether you can give any more details. Is the material "published"?

If the story is true, I am sure you would be very deeply concerned over the social implications of such a bombshell. What steps have you contemplated or taken?

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg